

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

Washington, D.C. 20515

December 3, 2001

His Excellency Kofi Annan
Secretary-General
The United Nations
New York, New York 10017

Dear Secretary General Annan,

We are writing to express our strong opposition to the upcoming meeting of High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention convening on December 5, 2001 to discuss alleged Israeli violations against Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. We are deeply concerned about the meeting's one-sided agenda, which threatens to politicize a vital humanitarian tool of the international community and incite a dangerous escalation of the Middle East conflict.

The proposed Draft Declaration for the meeting, which was organized at the request of the Arab League and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, is staunchly biased with respect to all of the most sensitive issues regarding the final status of Jerusalem and refugees. It calls for the imposition of a United Nations observer force, a proposal that has already been rejected by the Security Council, and would severely undermine the renewed diplomatic efforts by envoys of the United States, the United Nations, and others to end the violence.

As you know, the Fourth Geneva Convention was adopted by the international community in response to Nazi atrocities during World War II. It is an unprecedented degradation of the spirit and purpose of the Convention for it to be used as a political weapon to attack, vilify, and condemn one country, Israel, which continues to suffer Palestinian terrorists attacks against innocent Israeli civilians.

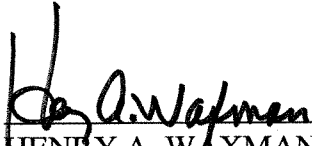
We fear that the convening of the meeting encourages the continued campaign by those who earlier this year misused the United Nations World Conference Against Racism as a platform to promote viciously anti-Semitic and anti-Zionist declarations. Such provocation could seriously exacerbate tensions in the region. Furthermore, the United Nations cannot maintain a constructive role in reducing hostilities between Israelis and Palestinians when it legitimizes such a forum that serves only to worsen them.


We understand that your office will be represented at the meeting by the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights (UNHCHR). We urge you to join us in opposing the one-sided conference agenda to preserve the integrity of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

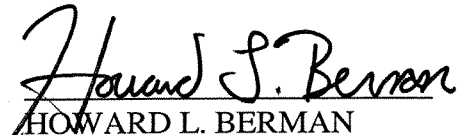
December 3, 2001


Thank you for your attention to our concerns. We look forward to your response.


Sincerely,

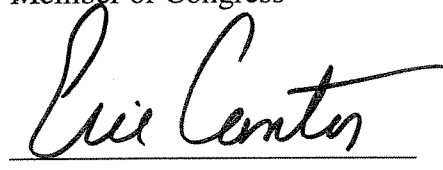

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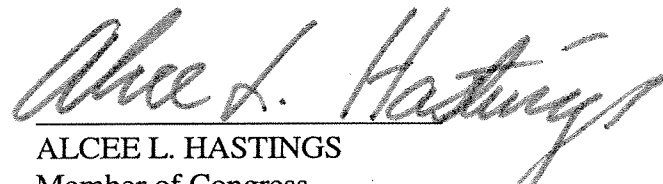

ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN
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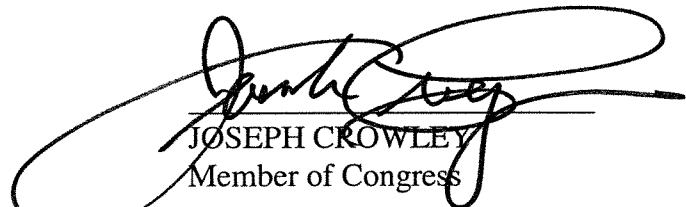

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Signatories to letters to U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan and Swiss President Moritz Leuenberger

1. Henry A. Waxman
2. Tom Lantos
3. Benjamin Gilman
4. Gary L. Ackerman
5. Howard L. Berman
6. Alcee L. Hastings
7. Ileana Ros-lehtinen
8. Eliot L. Engel
9. Robert Wexler
10. Joseph Crowley
11. Eric Cantor
12. Carolyn B. Maloney
13. Michael R. McNulty
14. Peter Deutsch
15. Mark S. Kirk
16. Brad Sherman
17. Ellen O. Tauscher
18. Shelley Berkley
19. Janice D. Schakowsky
20. Constance A. Morella
21. Anthony Weiner
22. Jerrold Nadler
23. Steve Israel
24. Barney Frank
25. Ronnie Shows
26. Steven R. Rothman
27. Adam B. Schiff
28. Albert Wynn
29. Carolyn Mccarthy
30. Nita M. Lowey